

Having reared large numbers of botflies from the larvae it seems to me that the common idea that they are difficult to rear is a mistake and it is to be greatly hoped that those who find them hereafter will either rear them or send them to someone who is interested in so doing. Many of the references in the literature are to very doubtfully classified specimens based upon the larva alone.

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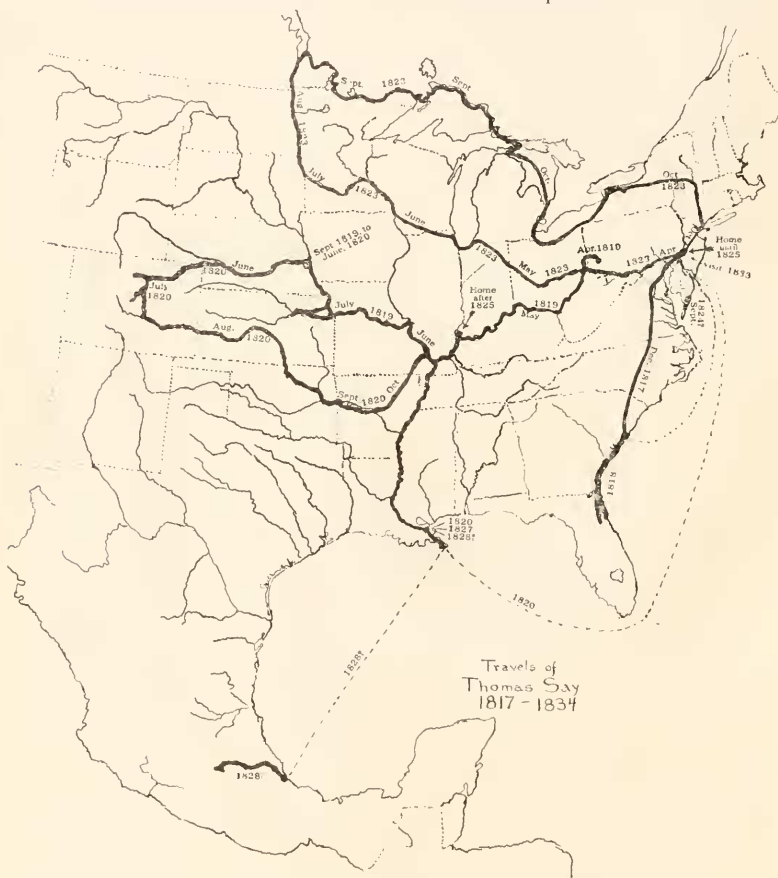
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Thomas Say's Unrecorded Journey in Mexico.

By H. S. BARBER, Bureau of Entomology, Washington, D. C.

When definite type localities are not recorded for species described long ago, it is of the utmost importance that the modern systematist understand what geographical sources could have contributed material to the describer up to the time of his study. But it often requires a long and tedious search through the records of a pioneer naturalist such as Thomas Say before any clear idea can be formed of the areas from which collections were available at different times in the progress of his studies. If we should now attempt to identify the weevil, *Lymanthes scrobicollis* Schoenherr 1837, a species long considered unrecognizable, whose type locality is recorded as "America borealis. A Dom. Say amice communicatus," it would be of importance to know if the faunae of Mexico City and Vera Cruz need to be considered in addition to the better known collecting grounds of the sender. The numerous species described by Say without more definite locality than the laconic "Inhabits Mexico" have been a source of perplexity to modern workers, some of whom have interpreted this locality as New Mexico, but, as is shown below, there is ample evidence that Say actually visited Mexico City. It is probable that all of his Mexican forms were collected along the old road between Vera Cruz, Jalapa, Mexico City and Tacuba.

Personal experience with the honey-storing, papernest wasp, *Nectarina mellifica* (Say) (see Proc. Ent. Soc. Wash., vol. 7, 1905, p. 25), led the writer to read Say's account of this species (below quoted), so it was quite a surprise to find later that no mention of his journey to Mexico appears in the biographies of this fine old naturalist. The "trail map" here shown is



drawn chiefly from the maps of the two expeditions of Major Long in which Say participated, but much additional information has been taken from certain remarks appended to descriptions of species.

In 1829, Say described numerous flies, and in 1831 numerous weevils from Mexico without definite locality. In another paper, published in December, 1831, he several times names Mexican species from specimens collected by William Bennett and presented to him by Mr. MacIure, and among these he describes *Corixa mercenaria*, with comparisons and remarks, in the first person, as follows, indicating that Say had, himself, been in Mexico City:

Passing through the market in the city of Mexico I obtained a few specimens from the quantity of at least a peck, exposed for sale by an Aztec woman. They are made use of as food.

Commenting on a rove-beetle (*Oxytelus rugulosus*) described by him in 1834, he says: "I obtained three specimens of the *rugulosus* in Mexico."

Again, in a posthumous paper published in 1837, in describing two species of stingless bees from Mexico, he says of one:

My specimens are workers, and I did not find the nest or ascertain the kind and importance of the honey they make.

Of the other he says: "Of this I obtained but a single specimen—."

But even more convincing is his account of the honey-storing, papernest making wasp which he describes as *Polistes mellifica*, in which he says:

Not being able to find my notes relative to this species, I can only state, that near Jalapa, my attention was attracted by a group of Indians, who were eating honey from a paper nest which was then so far dissected in their repast that I could not ascertain its proper form. The honey had a pleasant taste, and as far as I could gather from their gestures, the nest was obtained in a tree. Some of the specimens above described I found crawling feebly away and others I extracted from the cells in a perfect state. [He then continues, still writing in the first person, with lengthy technical remarks.]

On referring to his papers on Conchology a number of more convincing remarks are to be found, a few of which may be quoted here:

Inhabits Mexico. I obtained several specimens in a ditch beside the road between the capital and Tacuba.

Occurs in plenty a short distance below Vera Cruz. We found them immediately behind the sand hillocks of the coast . . . did not see a living specimen.

We collected many . . . in the marshes near New Orleans and on the banks of the Carondelet Canal.

I obtained a few single valves . . . at New Orleans during a short sojourn in that city with Mr. Maclure in 1827.

Discussing artifacts from the prehistoric mounds (Disseminator for June 23, 1831—not seen by present writer*) Say says a certain

—implement which probably served as a knife—resembles the obsidian knives of the ancient Aztecks, or perhaps of the Tultecks, of which we found a great many near the Mexican city of Chalco—

and the Prince of Wied, who had visited Say at New Harmony and from whose book (*Travels in the Interior of North America*, english translation, 1843, p. 80.) the last quotation has been taken, further discusses these

Instruments . . . found even now in Mexico, some of which Mr. T. Say brought with him from his journey to that country, and wrote a paper respecting them.

In Lockwood's narrative of the New Harmony Movement (Appleton, 1905) the presence of Say and Maclure at New Harmony in 1827 is mentioned as well as the latter's departure for Mexico in 1828 leaving Say in charge of his interests in New Harmony.

Through the kindness of Mr. Wade his as yet unpublished bibliography of Thomas Say in "Bibliography of Biographies of Entomologists" has been available to me, but no mention of Say's Mexican journey has been noticed in the articles cited. An outline of his journey to Florida appears in two letters dated Washington, Dec. 12, 1817, and Philadelphia, June 10, 1818 (*Ent. News* 1901, vol. 12, p. 233-236) mentioning his

*Mr. B. E. Montgomery has looked up this publication in the library at New Harmony and finds this article is anonymous and that the date is June 25, 1831, instead of June 23. The Prince of Wied may have had knowledge that it was written by Say.

journey with Maclure in carriage from Philadelphia via Washington to Charleston, S. C., where they shipped to Savannah and, joining Ord and Peale, proceeded slowly by sloop to St. John's River. The two-year trip with Long to the Rockies is briefly narrated by Say in another letter dated at Philadelphia, Aug. 29, 1821, (see Ent. News 1901, vol. 12, p. 314-6), and the six-month journey to Lake Winnipeg with Long is outlined in another letter from Philadelphia dated Nov. 30, 1823, (see Ent. News 1902, vol. 13, p. 39-40). Perhaps further evidence of his journeys to New Orleans and Mexico, or elsewhere, can be contributed by some one who knows of unpublished letters from New Harmony. After a rather careful search through the numerous but fragmentary accounts of this very impressive character, the opinion voiced by Dr. Dall almost forty years ago in the footnote to his appreciative account (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash. 1888, vol. 4, p. 101) may well be quoted: "A better biography of Say is greatly needed."

Postscript, November, 1927.

Since writing the above, two very important published statements of such definite nature as to almost demand deletion of the word "unrecorded" from the title of this article, have been found and the writer is greatly indebted to Miss Hazel Bartlett of the Library of Congress, Washington, and to Mr. Wm. J. Fox, of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, for the references.

S. G. Morton, in his Memoir of William Maclure, read in 1841 and published in Philadelphia (2nd edition, 1844, p. 21) wrote:

We accordingly find him [Maclure] in the autumn of 1827 embarking for Mexico in company with his friend Mr. Say. They passed the winter in that delightful country . . . and on the approach of summer they returned to the United States.

E. J. Nolan, in his account of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences (Founders Week Memorial Volume, Philadelphia, 1909, p. 156) states:

The communistic experiment in which they were engaged having proved a failure he [Say] accompanied Mr. Maclure

to Mexico. He remained there for twelve months and was then compelled by business engagements to return to New Harmony.

The source of information of either of these statements is not known.

From a work of fiction (Seth Way, *A Romance of the New Harmony Colony*, by Caroline Dale Owen—Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917) one may better comprehend than from historical memoirs, the characters, ideals and inspirations which found their expression in the New Harmony undertakings. "In character and scientific attainments the hero is Thomas Say" but in the story he (Seth Way) appears to be a wandering lad working at New Harmony before the arrival of Say who is thereafter rarely mentioned.

"The Communism of Thomas Say" is the subject of a very recent paper by Weiss & Ziegler (*Journ. N. Y. Ent. Soc.*, vol. 35, pp. 231-239) but unfortunately Coates' Memoir of Say was not before them and Ord's statements which they adopt, of Say's supposed handicaps in education and literary style seem a matter of personal taste, inconsistent with the known utility of Say's writings. According to this paper (probably adopted from Ord) Maclure and Say remained at New Harmony until 1828 when the former went to Mexico leaving his interests in the latter's charge but this disagrees with the above evidence that they spent the winter of 1827-8 in Mexico. Coates and Ord differ in many points, the latter, for instance, inferring that Say remained quietly at New Harmony after his departure from Philadelphia in 1825, while the former describes Say's appearance during a visit to Philadelphia some months before his death. Ord states that as a mark of respect Say was subsequently called one of the founders of the Academy while Coates publishes minutes of meetings showing Say to be one of the original group mentioned in, and signing the first resolution although unable to attend the first meeting.